DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 195 042 EA 013 138

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TITLE Policy About Policy: Some Thoughts and Projections.
PUB DATE 11 Aug 80
NOTE 33p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (34th, Norfolk, VA, August 10-15, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Policy: *Board of Education Policy: Boards of Education: Citizen Participation: Collective Bargaining: Community Involvement: Educational Policy: Elementary Secondary Education: Parent Participation: *Policy Formation: Public Education: State School District Relationship: Student Participation: Superintendents: Teacher Participation

ABSTRACT

In order to perform their proper functions without getting sidetracked by administrative details, school boards must establish a policy about policy. More is required than a set of rules codifying existing procedures. A school board must consider the educational focus of its decision-making responsibilities, the political factors affecting its policy-making, its legal role and responsibilities, and any other relevant factors before determining what kind of policy development processes are most likely to prove successful. Whole new notions of local school governance may result. This document offers 12 proposals that could help boards make policy about policy. These proposals concern the necessity for formal statement of policy, the establishment of educational policy as the primary focus of the board, frequency of policy-making work sessions, preparation of policy-making agendas years in advance, the length of superintendents' contracts, definition of evaluation criteria for superintendents, shifting of collective bargaining responsibilities to the state level, representation of professional educators on the school board, utilization of a disciplined framework for policy enunciation, training of board members and executive staffs in policy development processes, and sustained involvement of students, parents, citizens, and educators in policy development processes. (Author/PGD)

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POLICY ABOUT POLICY: SOME THOUGHTS AND PROJECTIONS

The Walter D. Cocking Lecture
1980 - NCPEA
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia
August 11, 1980

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EA 013 138

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POLICY ABOUT POLICY: SOME THOUGHTS AND PROJECTIONS

Introduction*

In this Walter D. Cocking lecture, I hope to achieve three objectives: (1) to provide a rationale for the examination of the governance and management functions at the local school district level; (2) to advance for discussion a set of proposed changes in these functions consistent with the rationale; and (3) to emphasize what I believe to be the importance of policy about policy.[1]

Three questions raised by Yehezkel Dror a dozen years ago provide the general frame for the thoughts and projections which follow:

1. Is public policymaking to follow the traditional pattern of evolving by slowly adjusting to new conditions and knowledge by means of incremental changes and convulsive changes following crisis, or is public policymaking, in part at least, to be consciously subjected to a new and explicit systems redesign that aspires to improve policymaking as much as possible?

2. What optimal design for public policymaking can serve as an instrumental goal toward which real policymaking should be directed?

3. Are there feasible strategies for changing actual policy-making so as to better approximate optimal public policymaking?[2]

My search for answers to these questions reflects a strong bias toward rationality in policy and decision making as well as the incorporation of the best knowledge available in processes attendant to policy and decision making. I do not reject Lindbloom's thesis of incrementalism (muddling

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*The work of several people is reflected in the contents of this paper. Harold D. Lasswell, Yehezkel Dror, Richard C. Snyder, Mary Parker Follett, Vincent Ostrom, and Charles E. Lindbloom are major sources of ideas relative to policy. Roald F. Campbell, Raphael O. Nystrand, Francis S. Chase, David Tyack, William Boyd, Keith Goldhammer, and Jack Culbertson are persons who have helped me understand more fully educational policy especially the context within which policy is developed at the local school district level.

through) as an explanation of how things "are," but I do quarrel with the acceptance of incrementalism as satisfactory policy practice for the future.[3]

Local school officials and their constituencies will be facing several critical policy matters in this decade (some new, some enduring). These issues will test severely the structures and processes of policymaking within local districts. Despite the cascade of state and federal mandates and a profusion of court decisions that have the effect of policy, there is considerable policy work remaining to be done at the local level. Local control and local responsibility are very much alive. Policy issues are queuing up for local attention. For example, local and state authorities will soon have to develop fresh policies in regard to: the first four years of life; life long learning, secondary education; equity; classroom control and discipline; global education; languages; human resource development; incentives; testing; and resource acquisition and allocation.[4] I would hope therefore that a good many boards would develop <u>policy about policy</u>.

In considering <u>policy about policy</u> I intend much more than the codification of policies, rules, and regulations, a subject discussed with some enthusiasm at early NCPEA meetings, and the annual assemblies of the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association in the 1940's and 1950's. The object of my concern is the improvement of practice within the local units of government (local school districts) where educational policy is developed. As most of us are aware, governance and management functions are performed within settings and contexts that possess the attributes of the society at large e.g., uncertainty, turbulence, goallessness, anomie, tensions, and crisis.

The structures and processes of local district governance and management have changed little over the past century. In many places they appear

to be creaking and groaning at the seams and at least warrant inspection if not reform. The pursuit of qualitative improvement of educational policy through more rational processes, within an open political environment, is a noble pursuit, certainly worthy of the time and energy of professors of educational administration. If Walter Cocking were with us at this assembly, I believe that he too would judge it so.

Rationale

Harold D. Lasswell drew a distinction between political science and policy science. Policy science is composed of two essential elements: (1) one is the study of the process of deciding and choosing among alternative courses, and (2) is the evaluation of the relevance of available knowledge for the solution of particular problems. Political science is the study of influence and the influential. It is the science of politics and as such, states conditions whereas the philosophy of politics, justifies preferences. Policy science is more than political science but political science is essential to policy science. In his section on "Policy Sciences" in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Lasswell places considerable emphasis upon the sources from which policy scientists can be recruited and trained:

> The chief obligation of the policy sciences relates to the decision process itself. At present the academic disciplines most immediately involved include political science, law, public administration, business management, political sociology, and contemporary political history.[6]

Dror has extended and refined Lasswell's thinking in regard to policy, policy scientist, and policymaking process in ways that I find helpful. Dror maintains that "The major problem at which policy science is directed is how to improve the design and operations of policymaking systems."[7] Further, he argues, that "Policy science can therefore be partly described as the discipline that searches for policy knowledge, that seeks general policy-issue knowledge

and <u>policymaking knowledge</u>, and integrates them into a distinct study."[8]

Dror explains that in policy development, knowledge is required of the substance of policy issues e.g. medical knowledge is relevant to policies about public health and sociological knowledge is relevant to policies about social segregation.[9] It follows that knowledge about pedagogy is relevant to education policy. Policymaking knowledge refers to such things as how organizational structures operate (organizational theory); coordinating and integrating different policymaking units (political science); and analyzing, improving, and managing complex systems (systems theory).[10]

For me the distinction between policy issue knowledge and policymaking knowledge is powerful and compelling. It tends to separate the essentially status quo, 'acceptance of things as they are,' perspective of persons like Lindbloom, from the more optimistic, 'we can do something about our circumstances,' views of Lasswell and Dror.

Yehezkel Dror says more about policy scientists:

> First, all students of narrow specialties must learn the basic concepts about human and social behavior, especially about those phenomena most likely to be misunderstood by the uninformed. Also, on the graduate level, work on comprehensive policy projects as members of interdisciplinary teams and in survey courses on policy science should be obligatory for students whose professional careers may involve work in policymaking structures, such as traffic engineers, public-health experts, city planners, economists, and statisticians.
>
> Such academic preparation can be very helpful, but is insufficient by itself. The student's lack of time and experience must keep him from doing much more than broadening his horizons, which would still be a big advance over the present situation. Additional steps must be taken to permit better integration of experts into policymaking after they actually begin participating in units that contribute to policymaking. These additional steps might include rotation designed to give single-discipline experts some experience in solving problems comprehensively, planned participation in interprofessional teamwork and in the general training programs for senior civil servants, and for the more important experts,

special advanced training courses.

> Special attention must be paid to developing new types of experts who specialize in the applications of various interdisciplinary fields to policymaking, especially policy scientists who will serve as professional policy analysts in new staff positions. The new professions of civil strategist and systems analyst demonstrate rather well what I have in mind on a broader scale. Preparing policy scientists for staff positions as policy analysts will be one of the most important functions of policy science, and is a major reason why policy science must be established as a distinct area of research and advanced study.[11]

There are important questions here relative to the relationship between policy science and administration and the implications of the policy sciences for the preparation of educational administrators. Time prohibits the examination of those matters now.

The several proposals for changing the governance and management of local school districts which follow are intended to achieve practical objectives:

> Use the time and energy of board members and administrators more efficiently and effectively;
>
> Maintain a primary focus on <u>education policy</u>, especially learning outcomes;
>
> Pursue policy development processes which are open to, indeed, require the participation of citizens and professionals;
>
> Clarify the accountability of all participants in policy development processes as well as specify the bases for assessing the performance of persons employed by local districts;
>
> Extend and intensify the citizen role in educational policy development and policy oversight;
>
> Incorporate the best knowledge available (both policy issue and policymaking knowledge) in the processes of policy development;
>
> Keep pace with the growing complexity of individual and organizational life, and enhance capacity to anticipate educational needs generated out of change; and
>
> Lead to the development of <u>policy about policy</u>.

Periodically in the history of American education leaders have suggested that boards of education have become anachronisms, have fulfilled their mission, should be reformed, or quietly fade away.[12] There was a period at the turn of the century when the notion of abolishing school boards attracted support from the then emerging profession of educational administration joined by elites from the business and higher education communities. The theme was revised and revitalized in the late 1920's principally by Charles Judd, then Chairman of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago.

More recently, Dr. Gene Geisert, formerly Superintendent of Schools in New Orleans, made suggestions regarding altered governance for large city school districts which would change if not diminish the role of boards. Several proposals have been advanced for new metropolitan forms of school governance with modest alterations in the policy and managerial expectations for boards and superintendents.[13] But none of these has called for the removal of laymen from policy responsibilities for school districts.

On occasion the governance and management of school systems has been wrested from local school authorities and placed in unique forms of receivership or trusteeship. (South Boston High School, Trenton, New Jersey and the Cleveland, Ohio public schools are recent examples.) These receiverships have been generated out of crisis circumstances which called for extraordinary forms of state and/or court intervention. The proposals that follow are not crisis centered nor are they framed on the belief that laymen are necessarily managing education ineffectively, capriciously, or selfishly in most places. These proposed changes are based essentially on the recognition that the complexity of today's public institutions is such that they are often not governable or manageable within present approaches to their governance and management and are likely to be less so in the future. To put it another way,

new and altered ground rules regarding policy development are essential if governors and managers are to conduct their business satisfactorily in the future. My proposals therefore retain the principles of local control and policy determination by citizens but change the conditions under which policy is determined and administration is performed. I am at the same time intending to strengthen institutional appraisal by placing school board members, school administrators, and the leaders of professional organizations in clearer, more fundamentally accountable positions. It is expected that the present pattern of school board behavior and ideology be altered in favor of practices which will allow sounder, more rationally determined school district policy.

Synopsis of the Policy about Policy Proposals

Should local school boards (and state education authorities where required) take action in regard to these proposals they would in fact be developing policy about policy.

I propose:

(1) That local boards of education develop discrete and definitive policy about policy, some of which are implied by the subsequent proposals for change in the governance and management of local school districts;

(2) That educational policy become the primary and continuing policy focus of local school officials as distinct from personnel, business, and physical facilities for example;

(3) That school boards meet four times per year for extended periods of time (two or three days) in order to gain full command of policy related data and knowledge, have time to reflect, and consider the views of citizens in regard to policies under consideration;

(4) That policymaking agenda be prepared, two to three years in advance, to frame the work of the Board, administrative staff, professional organization leaders, student leaders and citizen groups;

(5) That superintendents be given long term contracts (three to five years) with clear cut guidelines to surround their performance as well as the freedom to administer schools within those boundaries;

(6) That the form and substance of the superintendent's evaluation be clearly defined and understood at the outset of the contractual period and that data be accumulated and organized to allow the board as the employing agency to pass adequate judgment about the superintendent's performance;

(7) That the employee salary and wage determination prerogative now retained by boards of education of local school districts be moved to the state level;

(8) That representatives of professional groups (teachers and administrators organizations) for local school districts become members of the local boards of education and assume policy and accountability responsibilities equivalent to that office;

(9) That boards of education utilize a disciplined framework for policy enunciation and employ that framework within a facility especially designed for that activity, one which emphasizes the efficient use of data retrieval and display technology;

(10) That school board members and the executive staffs of school districts be trained to handle policy development activity for their enterprises;

(11) That one or more states pass special legislation allowing school districts to suspend (for a period of time) current statutes, rules, and regulations for the governance and management of school districts in order to test alternative approaches to governance and management; and

(12) That processes of policy development and their enunciation as well as the processes of management be designed to include genuine, sustained student, parent, citizen and professional educator involvement.

Discussion of the Proposals

The several proposals are a package for the most part.[14] There may be some value achieved by implementing one or two without the rest. But if the objective is effective education policy and managerial performance with accountability clearly defined, then the proposals should be considered as a set. And they must meet the criterion of contributing directly and demonstrably to improved education for all who enroll in a district's schools.

Proposal One:

> Local boards of education develop discrete and definitive policy about policy, some of which are implied by the remaining proposals for strengthening the governance and management of local school districts.

Much of what should be achieved early in the consideration of these changes, in my judgment, is the establishment of an ethos or climate within which the policy function is enobled and understood. Such an ethos presumes commitment to policy development and belief in its significance on the part of policymakers and executives. Policymaking as now experienced is simultaneously the most difficult and least systematized activity of legislative and executive persons. It is likewise an activity where there is a significant gap between what is known of how policies can best be formulated and the ways that individuals and institutions do in fact make policy because we do know how to do it better. Thus there is the genuine prospect that the quality of policy output can be improved.

Dror argues pursuasively that changes are needed in structure and process patterns if we are to improve a policymaking system.[15] To begin then, we need to consider policy which legitimizes the need to examine the structures and processes of policymaking. School boards, with the concurrence of representative constituencies, should agree that their policymaking practices and procedures may benefit from close inspection potentially leading to redefinition and restructuring. With such agreement, then many policy about policy issues become legitimate. Among those may be the development of explicit policymaking methods and processes. Dror suggests that for purposes of current policymaking, the following elements should be standard features of a preferable policymaking method:

1. There should be some clarification of values, objectives, and criteria for decision making.

2. The method should include identifying the alternatives, with an effort to consider new alternatives (by surveying comparative literature, experience, and available theories) and to stimulate creation of novel alternatives.

3. The method should include preliminary estimating of expected payoffs from the various alternatives, and deciding whether a strategy of minimal risk or of innovation is preferable.

4. If the first, the incremental-change model should be followed. If the latter, the next step is establishing a cutoff horizon for considering the possible results of the alternative policies, and identifying the major expected results, relying on available knowledge and on intuition.

5. Analysis of the alternatives should deal with both quantitative ("economic") and qualitative ("political") factors, in order to overcome the limitations of current systems analysis and advance toward policy analysis.

6. The method should include an effort to decide whether the issue is important enough to make more comprehensive analysis worthwhile.

7. Theory and experience, rationality and extrarationality, will all be relied upon; the composition of the mix must depend upon their various availabilities and on the nature of the problem.

8. Explicit techniques, such as simulation and the Delphi method, should be used as far as they are appropriate, and knowledge from various disciplines should be brought to bear on the issues involved.

9. The method should include explicit arrangements to improve the policymaking by systematic learning from experience, stimulating initiative and creativity, developing the staff, and encouraging intellectual effort.[16]

Dror's methods lend themselves to incorporation within a policy development process. From my perspective a policy development process is similar to but not the same as the political process. The political process is usually thought to be a set of political activities involving heterogeneous sets of participants interacting one with another where basic values are translated into policy preferences. The policy development process is a much more sophisticated concept. It includes in its execution (1) a deliberate attempt to incorporate the most advanced forms of policy issue knowledge and information available related to the policies to be enunciated; and (2) a monitored political activity designed to ensure the broadest set of perspectives possible.[17]

The weight of proposal one is not to locate ways to reduce the interference or meddling on the part of school board members in the every day administration of the school system. The every day meddling (or involvement if you prefer) of school board members in administrative matters that occurs across the country is understandable. In fact board members believe deeply that they are serving their constituents when they interfere and meddle. Administrators often have little understanding of or patience for this sense of responsiveness that board members possess. As a consequence considerable institutional energy goes into disputes over the boundaries of board member and superintendent authority and responsibility.

Thus proposal one is based on the premise that both policy and administrative activity can be more efficient and effective if there is a <u>substantial alteration in the ground rules</u> for those activities. I believe that there should be intensive focusing of energy on each in the expectation that the integration of governance and management functions will produce a sounder institution. F. J. Roethlisberger noted in 1941 that:

> No conceptual framework can do more violence to the territory of the executive, or of anyone who is dealing concretely with cooperative phenomena, than the simple notion of cause and effect. For such a person in a position of responsibility a concept of a system involving relations of interdependence is much more useful because it structurally represents the complex events and their interrelations with which he has to deal.[18]

<u>Proposal Two</u>:

> <u>Educational policy become the primary and continuing policy focus of local school officials as distinct from personnel, business, and physical facilities, for example</u>.

I have been concerned in recent years about the drift of school board and executive service away from policy devoted directly to the educational process and learning outcomes for clients of the system. My concern is similar

to but not quite the same as what Callahan labeled as "the decent into trivia."[19] In the period of 1973-76 I had the opportunity to observe two major school boards close-up. In fact, I attended most of the meetings of one board (including committees) for a full year. My conclusion from those observations is that those boards' energies were addressed overwhelmingly to adult matters, those of personnel and finance especially, with little or no time devoted to the children and youth enrolled. Such adult centeredness could be defended had the preoccupation with adult centered issues linked visibly and fundamentally to learning. But in most cases as with collective negotiations for example, that linkage could not be determined.

Thus proposal two, like proposal one regarding a policy ethos, involves a commitment to <u>educational policy</u> first and foremost. It requires tenacity and vigilance on the part of school board members and professionals alike. And to ensure against drift and preoccupation with educationally remote matters, school boards should require of themselves and their executive staffs, <u>educational impact statements</u> to accompany their prescriptions. Each major decision or policy should be measured against its educational meaning for those enrolled in the district. Current techniques for impact assessments may not be well enough developed to meet local district needs. But the perfection of these techniques can become an objective and be another of the district's policies about policy.

<u>Proposal Three</u>:

> <u>The school boards meet four times per year for extended periods of time (two or three days in succession) in order to gain full command of policy related data and knowledge, have time to reflect, and consider the views of citizens in regard to policies under consideration</u>.

In each of the large cities that were a part of a recent study of school boards, board members were spending an inordinate amount of time (much of it

wasteful) in meetings of the full board plus committees of the board. Additional time was invested in preparation for board meetings. Board members were also engaging in extensive communication with one another, with school administrators, and with their constituents, between meetings, seeking the perspectives of others as well as listening to those brought to their attention regarding issues before the boards. Despite these investments of time and effort board members and school administrators shared frustrations about their inabilities to produce decisions that had some prospect for resolving problems and issues before them.

Regular and special meetings of school boards are often frenetic and unproductive. Policies are developed from a shallow information and data base. Some of the policies that are enunciated issue from what appear to be pure emotion and feeling rather than hard data and fact. The "attention span" of individual board members or the board as a collectivity is exceptionally brief and skimpy for some policy matters and exceptionally protracted for others. There is little meaningful specialized policy language used regarding policy and policy development. Most decisions are taken without thoughtful and indepth consideration of how those decisions relate to existing decisions or existing policies. Effective cross referencing hardly exists at all. Important financial decisions are often taken at the very last minute, under extreme pressure, and with little understanding of or consideration for the long range fiscal or pedagogical consequences of those decisions.

Proposal three is designed to improve upon those circumstances. Boards should meet for extended periods of time (in my judgment for two or three days in publicly announced policy development sessions). These meetings should focus upon a review of the educational policy needs of the system, the development of a policymaking agenda, and the consideration of policy

proposals produced through an agreed upon policy development process. Such work should take place in an environment (described later) designed specially to augment the policy development process. Staff work prior to policy development sessions should likewise reflect the most rational and effective policy development process techniques and practices known.

Proposal Four:

> Policymaking agenda be prepared two or three years in advance, to frame the work of the board, administrative staff, professional organization leaders, student leaders, and citizen groups.

Boards at all levels (with the participation of administrators, the leaders of professional organizations, students where helpful, and citizen group leaders) should develop a policy calendar which incorporates the policy agenda. The calendar should cover at least a two year time span with the first year (four quarterly meetings) firmly in place and the second year reasonably firm with the opportunity to make adjustments for satisfactory reasons.

As indicated it would be expected that the policy needs for a school system would be carefully considered and then calendared. The calendar and agenda would be announced and made available to the public. For example during a year of quarterly meetings school officials may choose to spend their first policy development period deciding the district's policy stance on preschooling (or the district's investment in the educational needs of children during their first four years of life). During the second policy development period the focus may be on the problems of graduates that are unemployable. A third intensive policy development period may be invested in producing policies for personnel evaluation and a fourth may address discipline and classroom control. Over a period of three years, a dozen policy areas could be thoroughly developed. Currently many school districts operate with policies that are

underdeveloped, obsolete, or nonexistent.[20]

Choices of items for the policy agenda should not be made casually. Considerable time and effort will be required of staff to prepare for two or three days of policy discussion and policy choice with opportunities for citizen involvement. The writing of policy related documents, identification and briefing of experts, scheduling of hearings are energy consuming and may compete with the performance of everyday managerial functions. Thus the selection of policy areas for development becomes a central governance and managerial responsibility. It is likely that only a few major policy areas can be developed and approved (prescribed) in a calendar year.

Proposal Five:

> Superintendents be given long term contracts (three to five years) with clear cut guidelines to surround their performance as well as be given the freedom to administer schools within those boundaries.

Board members are to fulfill three functions basically: First they are to choose a superintendent and develop policies and procedures for evaluating the individual's performance. Second, they are to be responsible for policy development and policy enunciation. Third they are to be responsible for appraising the district's performance and reporting to the public on that performance.

This proposal has to do with each of those three functions but speaks more directly to the first. Three to five years is a brief period in which to expect administrative personnel to achieve institutional goals and objectives.[21] It is a long time however for an ineffective superintendent to impact negatively upon an enterprise. Thus a three to five year time frame seems to be reasonable on the one hand but somewhat dangerous on the other. Implicit in this proposal is the belief that the chief administrator should have freedom to administer the schools with a minimum of board inter-

ference. It is essential that executive responsibility be focused intensively upon the day to day operation of the system as well as providing backup services to the policy development process. Many district level administrative staffs in city school systems we have observed spend fifty per cent or more of their working hours fulfilling service responsibilities (including running errands) for members of the board of education.[22] Such demands leave only a modest amount of time for the actual management of the district. Thus this proposal calls for a better balance and a clearer distinction between day to day management and servicing the policy development process.

Servicing the policy development process could be the responsibility of a policy scientist at least in large districts or at the state level. Learnings from policy science can be inserted into the development of educational policy. It is the occasion for exhibiting skills in the incorporation of policy development process knowledge and policy issue knowledge simultaneously into policy development. In most situations it would be unreasonable to expect that the superintendent of schools would fulfill the policy scientist role and function for school districts. It would not be unreasonable however to expect that the superintendent and executive staff would understand the contribution that a policy scientist can make to the policy development process. Thus it would seem reasonable that school officials would take steps to ensure that the policy scientist role and function be provided for in some way.

Proposal Six:

> The form and substance of the superintendent's evaluation be clearly defined and understood at the outset of the contractual period and that data be accumulated and organized to allow the board as the employing agency opportunity to pass adequate judgment upon the superintendent's performance.

The accountability problem as it relates to executives in large scale public organizations has hardly been touched in terms of effective ministry. The employment of the superintendent is a proper occasion for the examination of the provisions under which the superintendent is to be accountable. If board members are to focus on policy development (their role) with a minimum of attention to administrative matters (the executive role) then the superintendent's duties and responsibilities flow rather naturally from that decision.

The superintendent should be evaluated in terms of the successful management of the school system as well as the individual's ability to aid and support the policy development process. These are interrelated but distinct zones of executive responsibility. Both need to be spelled out in detail, thoroughly discussed by the board and the executive, and monitored with data collection devices consistent with the dual zones of responsibility.[23]

Proposal Seven:

> The employee salary and wage determination prerogative now retained by Boards of Education at local district levels be moved to the state level.

This may be the most controversial proposal of those advanced in this paper. It is one that just about everyone will question for one reason or other, but it is not clear who or how many will oppose it. It may be the most important proposal however if learning is to be improved.

The impact of collective bargaining on educational policy development processes at the district level is essentially negative. Considerable energy goes into negotiations detracting from both the management of the enterprise and rational policy development processes. In fact collective bargaining in some school districts has become a major policy enunciating activity for the system and is a process that fails to meet the criterion of political openness.

The collective bargaining process as practiced presently is sheltered, nearly clandestine, and rules out participation of many interested parties. The interests of students, parents, taxpayers, teachers, administrators, and others are ineffectively reflected at the table. There is little room for considering the items under negotiation in terms of their implications for such basic policy matters as learning outcomes, the effective desegregation and integration of schools, or the extraordinary problems of moving from adolescence into adulthood that young people experience today.

Thus I am proposing that salary, wage and fringe benefit determinations be moved to the state level. This will allow local district board members and administrators to focus on policy development that is related fundamentally to pedagogy and learning. Such a change will lift an enormous burden from the shoulders of local school officials and liberate them for work directly and fundamentally related to the learning of young people.

Bargaining at the state level has been discussed recently in California where staff for the Senate education committee conducted hearings on the concept. Obviously the political implications of this proposed change are profound but they are not without positive consequences at the state level too. Education will be center stage inescapably attracting statewide interest in the problems of teachers and other educational professionals.

Proposal Eight:

> Representatives of professional groups (teachers' and administrators' organizations) for local school districts become members of local boards of education and assume policy and accountability responsibilities equivalent to their offices.

Most, if not all, states would have to pass legislation that would permit representatives of professional groups to have designated places upon local policy bodies. It is a proposal that has many flaws and is offered

after considerable reflection. It is advanced partially from frustration and after witnessing the displacement of the educational welfare of children and youth with other interests that tend to erode educational opportunity.

There have been unfortunate divisions between and among teachers, administrators, and school board members who on a day to day basis are responsible for local district teaching, managing and policymaking. The weight of this proposal rests on shared responsibilities for policy development and institutional accountability among professional staff and school boards. Practitioners at the classroom and building levels are informed people with contributions to make in the educational policy development process. The products of policy development activity ought to reflect directly the best thinking of laymen and professionals. Thus it is of substantial importance that such persons be responsibly involved.

Historically, it was expected that superintendents would and could reflect the educational significance and implications of policy under consideration by boards of education. Such is not the case any longer, at least in many school districts with long histories of negotiated agreements. In some districts, perhaps many, it is literally not possible to develop needed new educational policies either because of existing negotiated contracts or the implications for future contracts are so severe as to cause board members and superintendents to abandon such educational policy development all together. They have reached an unfortunate stage of educational policy paralysis. Thus this proposal, linked with the movement of collective negotiations to the state level, is intended to produce badly needed new education policy at the local district level.

Proposal Nine:

Boards of education utilize a disciplined framework for policy enuncia-

tion and employ that framework within a facility especially designed for that activity, one which emphasizes the efficient and rational use of data retrieval and display technology.

As indicated earlier, it is my belief that boards of education and executive staffs adopt a rational approach to policy development. I would go even further and recommend adaptations of the decision seminar model of policy development authored by Harold D. Lasswell.[24] The decision seminar is both theoretically complete and practically feasible when persons are trained in its use. It has been tested in many contexts and holds unusual promise as a tool for public problem solving.[25] The model is both simple and complex simultaneously. It is data and information dependent, relies heavily upon rational processes, and permits (even demands) in its usage that the most contemporary and significant information be incorporated.[26]

The decision seminar operates most effectively in a physical environment conducive to the use of information technology such as computer terminals and cathode ray display panels. Ideally the policy development processes should occur around a large octagonal table with primary participants seated in a "theater in the round" arrangement allowing secondary and tertiary participants to witness and take part in policy development activity within policies and procedures established for that purpose. Technology should also be available to broadcast and/or telecast the proceedings to the community. Interactive communication with the community should be possible through telephone arrangements or other more advanced cable television capacity, again through policies and procedures established for this purpose.

Proposal Ten:

School board members and executive staffs of school districts be trained to handle policy development activity for their enterprises.

There is an assumption that persons elected to public office as well as those appointed to professional administrative positions are fully competent

to engage in policy development activities consistent with their responsibilities. Nothing could be further from the truth in either category.[27] The complexities which surround policy development and administration of education (and other institutions) are so extreme that they escape the ordinary patterns of learning and/or preparation.[28] Governance and management require disciplined approaches that are both efficient and effective. And persons must be especially trained to use those approaches if they are to produce policy and administrative activity consistent with the needs of contemporary institutions.[29] Haphazard, catch as catch can, incoherent and irrational approaches which have characterized policy and executive life in large institutions over the past two decades will not carry the weight of governance and management needs much further. Radical change is required and that includes the incorporation of an open, ordered approach to policy development and the special training and preparation of persons who are expected to employ a more rational system.

Proposal Eleven:

> One or more states should pass special legislation allowing school districts to suspend (for a period of time) current statutes, rules and regulations for the governance and management of school districts in order to test alternative approaches to governance and management.

The concepts and ideas incorporated in the proposals above are radical from one perspective, modest from another. They are probably too radical for state mandate and thus warrant special almost hothouse conditions for their testing and trial runs. Thus I urge state legislation which will permit local school districts, within prescribed parameters, to set aside existing governance and management provisions in order to test new approaches. A few of our local school districts cannot survive much longer with existing governance and management patterns.[30] Thus it would seem defensible for state legislatures to establish conditions and circumstances under which the test of new approaches can go forward possibly within these troubled districts

at least. Careful thought and planning will be necessary even in the formulation of legislation to allow such experimentation to occur. But those conditions and ground rules can be spelled out to allow experimentation to proceed responsibly.

Proposal Twelve:

> The processes of policy development and their enunciation as well as the processes of management be designed so as to include genuine, sustained student, parent and other citizen involvements.

These proposals may appear, despite disclaimers, to be elitist in character and intent. It may be feared that they would produce a closed system rather than an open one, to overestimate the value of knowledge and information, and to place too much confidence in board members ability to develop policy, and managers ability to manage under conditions of freedom and nonintervention. They are not.

I believe, with others, that policy development processes and management processes must be open and incorporate many perspectives. Participation is essential for a broad spectrum of citizens and professionals in all phases of policy development and management. Policy development implies a developmental process. Policy should not emerge full blown from the mouth of Zeus. Policy ought to be the product of lengthy study and investigation, citizen and professional review, and refinement before enunciation. The policy itself must reflect the finest thinking available, enlightened by the best research available. Similarly managerial activity must proceed with citizen involvement especially in the appraisal of institutional effectiveness.

This is an area where policy about policy is needed whether or not the other proposals for change are considered. Over the past dozen years or so local school officials have modified their practices regarding public participation and involvement in local decision making. But few districts

have produced comprehensive, well considered, local district policies in respect to participation and involvement.

A system of citizen involvement at the building level with well defined missions and purposes should be linked conceptually and practically to the governance and management system at the district level.[31] The present forms and structures for citizen involvement often lead to frustration rather than satisfaction and valuable citizen energies are wasted as a consequence.[32]

Concluding Discussion

There are implications to be drawn from the proposals outlined above. Some are latent. Some are manifest. Some are hidden. Some are in full view.

It is clear that one set of implications relates to policy development itself. From my perspective, it is evident that policy development process is an important concept and should be addressed to broad sectors of educational policy needs. It is also clear that policy development needs to be a disciplined and organized process requiring extensive amounts of time, conducted in settings conducive to concentration and reflection, and incorporating participation of laymen and professionals. Similarly there needs to be intensive thought given to the policy needs of school districts, including public and professional involvement in their identification, to the preparation of policy development agendas and calendars, to provisions for the training of school officials in their respective policymaking roles and responsibilities in the policy development process, and to incorporation of policy technologies and support capabilities to enhance the quality of policy products.

It is also clear that the policy requirements of an institution once understood, defined and calendared are manageable and can be met. In chaotic circumstances often many decisions are made but few well developed policies are produced. Actually only a few basic policies need to be developed

each year. Thus what may appear to be an overwhelming problem is not so intimidating when it is broken out into policy sectors and fitted into a rational agenda of review and development. The segmenting of intensive work on policy permits a staff to have reasonable periods of time to perform policy development services to board members. Much of the current frenzy which marks executive activity vis-a-vis school board need would be reduced. Information, which results from within district research as well as new knowledge acquired from other sources can be incorporated into the policy development processes.[33] Now it is not.

It is not the intent of these proposals to depoliticize education. It is the intent to make the policy process more open and accessible to larger numbers of stakeholders, less vulnerable to the machinations of policy elites, and more yielding to the best policy science intelligence that man has been able to devise. Implementation of the proposals would compartmentalize a bit more clearly the work of board members and executive staffs. But it would also lead to the integration of these two functions in order to produce an improved quality of institutional performance. In terms of power, more power would exist in the situation. The power and influence of neither the governors nor the managers would be reduced. Both would be enhanced. Implementation of these proposals would in my judgment create a setting where the idealized "creative experience" so wisely articulated by Mary Parker Follett in the mid 1920's could be realized. It would in fact be possible for integrative behavior to occur, reducing the occasions for compromise and stalemate.

There are constitutional, statutory, and other legal problems associated with the proposals. If taken seriously they may lead to rather general reexamination of the constitutional and statutory provisions for the governance and management of local districts. For example many current school board

responsibilities may need to be managed in other ways. Determining salaries and wages of school personnel, constructing (even naming) school buildings, authorizing the issuance of bonds, setting school tax elections or referenda of other sorts, the approval of federal applications for funding and other such decisions may be designated as responsibilities of other governments.

The removal of the collective bargaining function from local districts and placing it at the state level would clear out underbrush and permit boards of education and top school officials to focus more directly upon pedagogical and learning policy. State level bargaining may lead to a clearer, uniform delineation of the scope of bargaining and to the identification of educational program costs as distinct from those of personnel.

The three basic responsibilities of board members stated earlier would set the tone and establish the parameters of board and executive activity. Consequences would flow from responsible attention to those three board responsibilities. Much of the current trivia which occupies board member time and energy would fall away in favor of responsible educational policy activity and appraisal. The energies of the administrative staff on the other hand would be devoted to the effective administration of policies enunciated by the board. As a consequence of longer contracts for superintendents the period for judging the effectiveness of administrative leadership and performance would be extended. At the same time school district planning would fall within longer time frames and some sanity could be restored to the administration of many school districts where chaos is now the rule.

The final set of implications surrounds the need to prepare both policy-makers and executives in ways consistent with these new emphases. It is proper to caution that the precise forms and content of policy development process training is yet to be organized. In fact there is substantial

skepticism about the current capacity of policy scientists to contribute much of value to policy development. Lindbloom and Cohen in commenting upon policy analysis and systems analysis say that:

> Waste, noise, and the excesses of 'policy analysis' all reflect we suggest, a kind of hyper-rationalism among pPSI (practitioners of Professional Social Inquiry). As a result of inattention to the limited contribution of PSI to social problem solving so far, pPSI often succumb to the belief that, given enough PSI, all social problems can be significantly ameliorated by it. In actual historical fact, the 'solution' to many social problems is simply continued suffering. Or repression. Or a solution that itself creates new problems.

The present conduct of governance and managerial activity often appears rational but that is essentially a veneer. Attendance at board meetings of a large city recently was shocking even though I have been attending board meetings in school districts (large and small) across the nation for nearly thirty years. The agenda for the session, a regular meeting, was on a single sheet of paper with no documentation. There was no way for people in the audience to follow what was happening. During the meeting no explicit references were made to the agenda. Board members were obviously posturing and preening for media and constituents in the audience. The administrative staff was unorganized. No references were made to learning; all discussion was adult centered. The relationship between the work of the governors and managers in this district and learning activity in the classrooms of that large city were not discernible. School board members and administrators of that district (as well as many others) would have to be trained in policy development. Thus there are implications for colleges, universities, consulting firms, state departments, school board and professional organizations and other governmental agencies regarding the pre and inservice training of executives and board of education members in policy development.[35]

These proposals are modest when we consider the seriousness of the need for improved performance. In my judgment the time has passed for casual, uninformed policymaking.[36]

Some local and state boards of education are moving in some of the directions that I have proposed. The State Board of Education in Illinois is reflecting in its practice some of the ideas I have discussed, specifically the utilization of a policy development process, an annual three day retreat for learning and planning, training in policy development processes, and the development of an extended policy agenda. The Toledo Public Schools are designing a "map and strategy" room to facilitate policy development. The Milwaukee Board of Education is considering policy about policy and the new Chicago Board of Education may consider some of the concepts herein proposed. The California State Senate held hearings recently on moving collective bargaining to the state level. And at the Ohio State University we will be convening (in conjunction with the UCEA partnership program) representatives of a half dozen school districts to consider the above proposals for potential adoption or adaptation.

These are modest beginnings. Much more fundamental, far reaching reforms are required.

Footnotes

1. Discussion of policy usually engenders a lively debate covering perennial questions: What is policy? What is it not? Where does policy come from? Where does it not come from? Who makes policy? Who does not make policy? Settling upon a definition of the term policy within the academic community is itself a challenge of some dimension. For my purposes I use the definition of policy found in A Dictionary of the Social Sciences. "Policy refers to a course of action or intended course of action conceived as deliberately adopted, after a review of possible alternatives, and pursued, or intended to be pursued."

2. Yehezkel Dror, Public Policymaking Reexamined. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1968, pp. 299-300.

3. See Charles E. Lindbloom, The Intelligence of Democracy. New York: The Free Press, 1965. Lindbloom argues that decision makers and/or policymakers do not attempt comprehensive survey and evaluation of decision and policy arenas. Rather they proceed incrementally and take as their starting points not the whole range of decision and/or policy alternatives but only the here and now in which we live, and they move on to consider how alternatives might be made at the margins. Lindbloom rejects essentially the theses of Lasswell and Dror which support comprehensive, wholistic approaches to policy examination and development.

4. Many of the challenges to school boards are described in Roald F. Campbell et al, The Organization and Control of American Schools, Fourth Edition, Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1980, Chapter VIII.

5. Harold D. Lasswell, A Pre-View of Policy Sciences, (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Company, 1971), pp.

6. Harold D. Lasswell, "Policy Sciences." International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, David L. Sills, ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1968. Vol. 12, p. 188. In conversations with Professor Lasswell in the six years prior to his death in 1978, we talked about the recruitment and training of policy scientists. He offered that preparation programs in educational administration would be another source of policy scientists. Persons chosen from educational administration for policy science careers would benefit from internship programs that would bring them into intimate contact with decision and/or policy processes. Such experience could occur at one or more levels of government or within any of several arenas of substantive interest e.g. education, energy, international relations.

7. Dror, op. cit. p. 8.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid. p. 7.

10. Ibid. p. 8.

11. Ibid. p. 257.

12. Raymond E. Callahan, "The American Board of Education, 1789-1960," in Understanding School Boards, ed. Peter J. Cistone, (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1975), pp. 19-46.

13. The most comprehensive reviews of metropolitan school governance and proposals for change appear in the two volume work edited by McKelvey. Troy V. McKelvey, ed., Metropolitan School Organization (Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1973).

14. Several of the proposals for change in the governance and management of local school districts were presented originally to the Utah Staff Seminar in Education, Salt Lake City, October 4, 1979 in a paper entitled "The Governance of Schools at the Local Level: Rules of Boards, Administrators, Teacher Organizations, and the Public." Later the same proposals were discussed at the annual meeting of the Pacific Regional School Boards Association, Tucson, Arizona, December 1979.

15. Dror, op. cit., p. 301.

16. Ibid. pp. 271-272.

17. The need for "policy development policy" and a framework for policy development processes are more fully presented in Luvern L. Cunningham, "Systematic Approaches to the Governance and Management of Urban Education," Studies in Educational Administration and Organization (Haifa, Israel: Center for Educational Administration, 1978). The theory is drawn from Yehezkel Dror, Public Policymaking Reexamined (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1968).

18. F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 174.)

19. Raymond E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) pp. 240-243.

20. Many large districts have found it very difficult to maintain up-to-date policy, procedures, rules and regulations documents. The problem is complicated by the growing numbers of rules and regulations accompanying state and federal programs. As a consequence administrators, teachers, board members, and citizens are poorly informed about what policies are.

21. Length of contract has been discussed thoroughly over the years. Lieberman argued for five year contracts twenty years ago in Myron Lieberman, The Future of Public Education (Chicago. University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 282. Nevertheless Utah for example limits superintendents' contracts to two years.

22. This situation was particularly severe in San Francisco in the mid 1970's. Individual board members "demanded" that the superintendent's staff make studies, prepare reports, or make investigations of matters of particular

interest to them. On one occasion one board member ordered that the central staff make a conflict of interest analysis of the boards of directors of all foundations that provided grants to the San Francisco Unified School District. Many foundations were involved one of which had nearly one hundred members on its board. The problem was made more severe when only two weeks were allowed for the completion of the request.

23. Few criteria for the evaluation of superintendents contain explicit statements regarding competence in leading a policy development process. Carol studied the evaluation of superintendents in New Jersey in the early 1970's. There were no examples of policy development criteria being applied. Lila N. Carol, Evaluating Chief School Officers in Local School Districts (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey School Boards Association, 1972).

24. Harold D. Lasswell, A Pre-View of Policy Sciences (New York: Elsevier Publishing Company, Inc., 1971).

25. Luvern L. Cunningham, "Policy Sciences in the Field: 1973-78," Quarterly Report (Columbus, Ohio: The Mershon Center, 1979). Also see Luvern L. Cunningham, "Applying Lasswell's Concepts in Field Situations: Diagnostic and Prescriptive Values." Paper presented at The International Society of Political Psychology, Third Annual Scientific Meeting, June 6, 1980, Boston, Mass.

26. For a synopsis of concepts involved in the decision seminar see Philip M. Burgess and Larry L. Slonaker, The Decision Seminar (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1978).

27. There are some things that can be done to improve the performance of public officials. See Glenn D. Paige, The Scientific Study of Leadership.

28. John W. Gardner in his recent book Morale sets the context and requirements for modern leadership insightfully stating that "The task of leaders in our kind of society is to help us understand the problems that all must face, to aid in setting of goals and priorities, and to work with others in finding paths to those goals." John W. Gardner, Morale (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1978), Chapter 16.

29. It is interesting that a volume written in 1966 directed to the problems of 1980 contained a chapter where the author emphasized the need for the public to educate itself about its problems and to use "social inventions" particularly as defined by Harold D. Lasswell to meet that need. Roger L. Shinn, "Human Responsibility in an Emerging Society," in Prospective Changes in Society by 1980, Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, eds. (Denver: Designing Education for the Future, 1362 Lincoln Street, 1966), Chapter 15.

30. The Cleveland, Ohio Public School System is a case in point. It remains on the verge of fiscal and educational bankruptcy with little hope of improvement short of complete reform within its governance and management.

31. Luvern L. Cunningham, et al, Improving Education in Florida: A Reassessment (Tallahassee, Florida: Select Joint Committee on Public Schools of the Florida Legislation, 1978), Chapter 3.

32. Robert E. Herriott and Neal Gross, eds., The Dynamics of Planned Educational Change (Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1978), pp. 255-56.

33. Such contexts for policy development permit the achievement of "double loop" learning first noted by Eric Ashby. For further discussion of "double loop" learning refer to Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schon, Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1974).

34. Charles E. Lindbloom and David K. Cohen, Usable Knowledge. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979) p. 91.

35. It is well to remember that there are psychic as well as dollar costs involved in retraining. Harold D. Lasswell, "The Changing Nature of Human Nature," American Journal of Psycho Analysis, XXVI, No. 2, 1967.

36. Alvin Toffler's book Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970) was published nearly ten years ago. It is well worth reading again, as his most recent volume The Third Wave, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1980).